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A Look Ahead to 2021

MELINA BOURDEAU
Staff writer

While no one can predict the future, a new year ushers in potential for change. Much like 2020 before it, COVID-19 will still exist in 2021, although there are plans to have people vaccinated in the spring and summer. Both Granby and Belchertown will be seeking to replace fire chiefs in the future as well as a superintendent for Granby Public Schools. This story will reflect on just a few of things to come in 2021.

Belchertown

In the very near future, the students of Belchertown Public Schools are anticipated to return on Jan. 4, according to Superintendent Brian Cameron in an email to the district on Dec. 18.

"We strongly believe that there is no replacement for in-person learning and the related connections between students and teachers and peers. However, the increase in community cases of COVID-19 may exceed our capacity to provide adequate, in-person staffing in our schools and we may be forced to switch to remote learning," he wrote. "If this occurs between Dec. 23 and Jan. 3, I will be sure to communicate any potential impact to our plan to return to in-person learning on Jan. 4 as quickly as possible. We will continue to assess community health data and review daily and weekly metrics with the board of health throughout the holiday break."

Another plan for the future will be repairs to the Chestnut Hill pool deck and a potential heat exchanger replacement.

Town Administrator Gary Brougham explained the current plan at the Dec. 16 Selectboard and Finance Committee meeting.

"After working through a number of pre-bid award meetings and discussion we had a responsible bid and we tried to schedule the work to be done next week," he said. "It's not a huge project, it's very complicated, it's a small area with a lot of work to be done."

He said the work will probably take about a week to complete, but there is a 28-day cure cycle on the concrete before the pool can be refilled.

In conjunction with the school grounds coordinator, the town planned on having the work done during the winter break. However, to avoid interrupting the swim season, the work has been rescheduled to February.

"We have a rescheduled date to begin on Feb. 15," Brougham said.

He added that the heat exchanger is the original on the pool, one which would need be replaced in early 2021 as well.

"It's 30-somehting years old, it's failing and we're limping along at near-minimum temperature," he said. "We've authorized the work and the part has been ordered and that will be replaced in the second or third week in January."

Additionally, the Quabbin Valley Disk Golf will potentially be in full swing by the spring, said President and Treasurer of Quabbin Valley Disk Golf Inc., Steve Corbin. The corporation is currently waiting to hear back from the IRS regarding a nonprofit designation.

The course will be located at the Constantino Field recreation area, behind, and north of the existing soccer field. The land used is owned by the town of Belchertown, and in cooperation with the Conservation Commission, leverages existing and compliant open space.

Corbin said the project is to create 18 holes for use for disk golf, but the hope is that people will use the area for mixed-use as well. Corbin added that three of the 18 holes will be ADA compliant.

As of Dec. 28, the conceptual design for the project is complete and Corbin hopes that construction will start "fairly quickly" in the new year.

"Construction is going to be limited to maybe removing a couple of trees, but the hope is to conform to what's already there," he said.

The group also has some fundraising to do in the future, with $8,000 to raise for the tee-boxes, which is the area from which the disk is thrown.

Corbin said he has high hopes for the disk golf course, which he said will "allow the sport to grow and attract professionals and newcomers alike."

In the coming year, there will also be two recently established committees which will take up their respective objectives.

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BELCHERTOWN

Fin com, BOS talk FY2021, FY2022

BY MELINA BOURDEAU
Staff writer

BELCHERTOWN – With the 2021 fiscal year underway and planning for next year's budget to begin shortly, the Belchertown Selectboard and Finance Committee held a joint meeting on Dec. 16 to discuss where the budget stands.

Town accountant Jill Panto began with a presentation on the CARES Act funding for the town.

Belchertown applied for and received $554,000 and spent $723,000, according to Panto.

There is an additional $779,000 available at the end of December or beginning of January, Panto said.

"Part of what we claimed, an estimate of $737,000, that was supposed to be FEMA eligible," Panto said. "FEMA has since changed their rules. If we want to be reimbursed for PPE and supplies we need to tell them where they were used. If we were using cleaning supplies for the library and there wasn't a suspected contamination then it is not eligible."

Panto said she anticipated that "the town will be made whole with the CARES Act. It's just a

See **BUDGET,** page 15 •

People Watching

PHOTO BY MELINA BOURDEAU

The cows on that reside near Bay Road spend time by the pine trees as cars drive by.

STATE

$1 billion to bolster unemployment fund, aid employers proposed

STAFF REPORT

BOSTON — Legislation was filed by gov. Charlie Baker's office last week aimed at keeping the state's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund solvent and easing the tax burden on employers whose contributions fuel the fund.

The proposal also seeks to lower the costs of servicing the Commonwealth's debt with the federal government. If approved by the legislature, the measure would "provide an estimated $1.3 billion in unemployment insurance relief to the Commonwealth's employers over two years," according to a news release from Baker's office.

The main provisions of the legislation include a two-year freeze on the scheduled increase in employer contributions from a per-employee average of $539 to $866. It also authorizes he issuance of special obligation bonds to re-pay federal advances.

"In order to fund the unprecedented increases in demand

See **UNEMPLOYMENT,** page 5 •

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Obituary Policy

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary,** costing $120, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph.

Death Notices & Paid Obituaries should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

COURTESY PHOTO

The June photo in J.R. Greene's 2021 Quabbin History Calendar shows the Swift River Box Shop in North Dana.

J.R. Greene releases 36th annual Quabbin History Calendar

ATHOL — Quabbin Reservoir historian J.R. Greene has released his thirty-sixth annual edition of the popular Quabbin History Calendar for 2021. The calendar features all new images, most in sepia tone, formatted by Joe Mitko. Each year the calendar has a new selection of pictorial memories of the villages obliterated for the construction of the Quabbin Reservoir and the Ware River diversion in the 1920s and 1930s.

This calendar for 2021 brings the total number of photos presented in these calendars to over 400, including many from the Ware River diversion villages. To maintain their goal of providing large size reproductions of views from these last places, they have included views of a school, church, factory, pool room and a summer camp. These views enhance the value of this calendar as a reflector of the lost valley's history.

The theme of this calendar is to honor the villages of the former Swift and Ware River valleys, and their way of life. This calendar is dedicated to the memory of the people who once lived in these places.

The 2021 Quabbin History Calendar is available for purchase at the following locations: Barre, Barre Family Pharmacy; Hardwick, Hardwick Farmers Co-op Exchange; Hubbardston, Country Trail; Palmer, Palmer Hobbies; Petersham, Quabbin Woods Restaurant; North Brookfield, Brookfield Orchard; Rutland, Rutland Pharmacy; Thorndike, Junction Variety; Ware, Ware Library; West Brookfield, Plantation Country Store.

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COMMUNITY

COURTESY PHOTO

Belchertown Education Foundation 2020 Community Champion Sean Sullivan, third from right, and his family live in Belchertown.

Sullivan honored as Belchertown Education Foundation 2020 community champion

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Education Foundation has awarded Belchertown resident Sean Sullivan as the organization's 2020 Community Champion.

Sullivan was commended for his community-minded citizenship in support of the Foundation's mission to enrich the education of students in Belchertown Public Schools. He has provided the Foundation with his technical expertise since its inception in 2017.

"Sean has been instrumental in digitally connecting the Belchertown Education Foundation with our community and donors, which allows us to communicate through electronic newsletters, raise funds and maintain our website and its functionality," says Board of Directors member Heather St. Germaine.

St. Germaine said, "Technology can be a challenge for small non-profits like ours. Sean has tirelessly provided his expertise and guidance to the Foundation for years. He is always there when we need him. He supports us through our technology challenges. Sean is a humble individual who is deeply invested in the community and works behind the scenes to bring the BEF mission to life. On behalf of the entire Foundation Board, I share my appreciation for Sean and the time and talent he has contributed to the Foundation over the years as we have grown our outreach and Student Success Grants Program."

Sullivan is the owner of XHeight Studios, providing digital marketing solutions to his customers. He grew up in Amherst and has been a resident of Belchertown since 2003. Sullivan said when he learned of the honor, "I am thrilled to be able to support, and give back to the great educational system that has and continues to shape and mold my children and those of the community."

Janice McCarthy, owner of McCarthy's Pub in Belchertown, received the organization's first Community Champion Award in 2019.

The Belchertown Education Foundation (BEF) is an independent, volunteer, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization committed to enriching the educational opportunities of students in Belchertown public schools. More at BelchertownEducationFoundation.org.

Board/committee vacancies

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Selectboard is looking for citizens interested in sharing their expertise by serving on a town board/committee.

If you have time and are interested in getting involved in your town's activities, please submit a letter of interest to: Board of Selectmen, The Finnerty House, One South Main Street, P.O. Box 670, Belchertown, MA 01007 or by email to selectmen@belchertown.org (unless otherwise indicated below).

The town wishes to fill the following vacancies:

Conservation Commission: The town wishes to fill a full member vacancy on the Conservation Commission. The commission is charged with the protection of the community's natural resources and advises other municipal boards and committees on conservation issues relating to their areas of responsibility. Interested applicants will need to familiarize themselves with the Wetland Regulations and attend workshops and meetings regularly.

The deadline has been extended to 12 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 8, 2021.

Cultural Council: The town wishes to fill a vacancy on the Cultural Council. The Council promotes an appreciation of the arts and culture by participating in the development and administration of funds for local cultural activities.

The deadline has been extended to 12 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 8, 2021.

Fair Committee: The town wishes to fill vacancies on the Fair Committee. If you are interested in playing an active role in the planning process of the annual Belchertown Fair and Parade, please submit a letter of interest to the Selectboard's Office.

The deadline has been extended to 12 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 8, 2021.

Historic District By-Law Commission: The town wishes to fill an associate member seat (non-voting) and an at-large (full member) seat on the Historic District By-Law Commission. The commission has regulatory control over new construction, reconstruction, alterations, movements and demolition of all exterior architectural features of buildings and structures within the Historic

See **VACANCIES,** page 4 •

Sometimes
Thank You
is **NOT** the perfect word
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the Belchertown
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Selectboard and my staff
has done for my business
since June 17th.

Your generous spirit and
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Happy Holidays &
Happy New Year!

Love ~
Janice McCarthy Rogers
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Coalition hears Baystate update on virus

Professor provides a virus overview

EILEEN KENNEDY
Staff writer

WARE – The Quaboag Hills Community Coalition hosted Molly Gray, president and chief administrative officer for Baystate Health Eastern Region, and Megan W. Harvey, a Springfield College professor to provide perspectives on COVID-19 during a Zoom call Dec. 21

Gray said Baystate's seven-day positivity rate that week was 8.1%, which is about the highest the healthcare company has seen. "But it's consistent with what's happening across the state," she said.

She said there were 158 of COVID-19 cases within Baystate's hospitals as of Monday, Dec. 21.

The big news she had to share was 2,127 employees just got their first dose of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine. "This could be a turning point," Gray said. Since Pfizer and Moderna vaccines differ somewhat although each needs two doses several weeks apart, she emphasized it is important to stay with the same manufacturer for the second shot.

As of that morning, Baystate officials had just 260 vaccinations left to give out, and hopes are that Moderna's COVID-19 vaccines will be on the way shortly; they've been ordered but they haven't yet arrived, she said.

The vaccines are given in a central location so those receiving shots can be monitored for any side effects. A small number of those receiving the vaccine may have a anaphylactic reaction to it, so benadryl and EpiPens are kept on hand. Of the 2,500 people receiving a vaccine at Baystate, three people experienced an immediate reaction but felt fine after taking benadryl, she said.

Gray said Baystate system-wide has 250 employees who are out with COVID-19, or must quarantine themselves after being exposed the coronovirus. "Every little bit helps or hurts us," she said about the ups and downs of having staff out or having them back to work.

Molly Gray, administrative officer for Baystate Health Eastern Region.

Megan Harvey, health sciences professor at Springfield College.

"The good news is what we're not seeing is the flu," Gray said. Healthcare officials across the country have worried here would be a "twindemic" of the flu and COVID-19 cases, which could overwhelm hospitals.

She said it has been really taxing and really tough for frontline workers, and JAC Patrissi, facilitator of the meeting, asked her to convey the group's gratitude for all their work.

Gray asked those attending to join her in role-modeling good behavior during the pandemic such as mask wearing, social distancing and refraining from large holiday gatherings.

Epidemiologist

Springfield College Professor of Health Sciences Megan Harvey said it is exciting because it looks like science will save the day with COVID-19 vaccines, which will help particularly frontline workers.

She said it is made of DNA from the coronavirus, which is then flipped to become RNA, but contains no actual virus material.

The coronavirus is more infectious than Ebola but less infectious than measles, mumps or rubella, but it's infectious enough to have its growth be exponential, she said.

Even with best estimates of COVID-19 deaths, the numbers indicate more people have died during the year than usual, and some of them are likely related to COVID issues.

As far as transmissions are concerned, big and small particles of the virus are spread, but it is also an airborne disease, because tiny particles can be suspended in the air for longer times and travel further making good ventilation important.

When asked about an evolved version of the virus recently found in England, Harvey said that's what viruses do, they involve, and often become more infectious. However, with the increase in its infectiousness, the virus usually doesn't become deadly, she said, and expects this coronavirus to be no different.

Schools

Harvey said she expects vaccines will be offered in the spring and summer, but the vaccines are not for children under 18 as of yet. "I expect next fall to be a much more normal school year." She also expects the rest of the school year will remain in the hybrid model, with a couple of days in-person and the remainder through remote learning. She said it was probably unrealistic to expect schools could return to a full in-person schools this school year.

Although vaccines are becoming available, she said all safety measures must stay in place to reduce the spread, including mask wearing, six-foot distancing and having adequate ventilation. She said it is thought that there is not a lot of spreading through surfaces.

She said children are less likely to develop COVID-19, and if they do, they usually have a less severe case compared to adults. Children often have no symptoms or very mild symptoms.

When asked about herd immunity, Harvey said it means when a large enough percentage of the population has immunity against the virus.

She pointed to measles, which has about a 90% immunity rate these days, and to have immunity from COVID-19, 70 to 75% of the population would have to be immune for the cases to decrease.

Harvey also said it is clear that it has been harmful for students to not be in school. "It isn't clear if that's from the anxiety of living in the a pandemic," she said, or being out of school without the fun of socialization. She also said students are experiencing more anxiety and depression, as are adults.

She said the only way to really stop the virus is by frequent testing of once or twice week, and then following up with contract tracing. It's an expensive proposition to do that testing, which is why it is mostly private schools and colleges that can afford to carry it out.

She was optimistic that "science helped save the day."

"I feel very hopeful that by February we'll be coming down the other side," Harvey said.

Belchertown Justice Collaborative launches jeopardy game

BELCHERTOWN – Looking for something fun to do on cold and dark winter nights? Do you think you know all there is to know about winter holidays? The Belchertown Justice Collaborative has a festive, fun and safe activity for you.

The Belchertown Justice Collaborative announced its first Winter Holiday Jeopardy game. The game will be open from now until Jan. 8. The game is designed to be challenging and competitive between adults. While it is still appropriate for families, it may not be engaging for children under 10. Compete in person against your close family members or play virtually with many different teams from far and wide.

Follow this link to play: https://jeopardylabs.com/play/2020-12-06-213

When you finish playing, make sure you finish the final jeopardy to be entered in a raffle.

First prize is the "build your holiday cookie package," purchased by the Belchertown Justice Collaborative, from Aunt Elsie's in Belchertown. Other prizes include Belchertown Justice Collaborative merchandise. Keep track of your points, if that is fun for you, but you can enter the raffle regardless of how well you do. People who answer the final jeopardy correctly will be entered for the first place prize, those who do not are still eligible for the other prizes.

This jeopardy covers a wide range of traditions and celebrations. It is not intended to be comprehensive, but instead offers a survey of many holidays.

VACANCIES • from page 3

District which are visible from any public street, public way or public park.

The deadline has been extended to 12 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 8, 2021.

Zoning Board of Appeals – Associate Member: The ZBA is responsible for hearing and deciding on applications for special permits, variances and appeals from decisions of the Zoning Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector.

The deadline has been extended to 12 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 8, 2021.

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UNEMPLOYMENT • from page 1

on the unemployment system in Massachusetts as a result of COVID-19, the Commonwealth has received federal cash advances," the release from Baker's office states.

"Through the issuance of bonds, the Commonwealth will be able to ensure positive trust fund solvency to enable the continued payment of benefits. The utilization of capital markets also allows Massachusetts to avoid paying punitive federal tax increases on employers regardless of their experience rating if federal advances are not repaid by November of 2022. Bonds issued will be supported by an unemployment obligation assessment and will not be general obligations of the Commonwealth."

State Sen. Eric Lesser said he looks forward to finding solutions that aid both employers and workers who are suffering because of the pandemic.

"The COVID-19 epidemic triggered waves of layoffs and financial hardship, especially for our small businesses and their employees," Lesser said last week.

"Our unemployment insurance system was supporting over 1 million people at the pandemic's height, and we continue to face historically high jobless rates. Since the pandemic began this spring, the Legislature has taken many steps to support impacted businesses and families, including expanding unemployment insurance, extending the number of weeks of relief, waiving waiting periods, and allocating tens of millions in direct aid to hard-hit local businesses. Moving forward, significant pain remains, and there is much more that needs to be done, including providing relief to businesses facing exorbitant new fees and other steps to support the unemployment insurance system. I look forward to working alongside my colleagues in the legislation and Governor Baker to move much needed reforms and help forward."

Another local local lawmaker, State Sen. Anne Gobi, said she supports the measure.

"I am in favor of doing as much as possible to assist our small businesses and I support the Governor's bill," Gobi said.

"We all know how devastating this past year has been and we must do all we can to protect people and our businesses. Keeping both healthy is a struggle. There is a comprehensive economic development bill currently pending before the Legislature includes additional substantial investments in small businesses and I am advocating to have that released before the end of the year."

Baker's proposal also establishes an employer surcharge on contributory employers.

"In 2020, all federal advances taken to pay benefits are interest free," Baker states in the release.

"However, interest on federal advances will begin to be charged beginning in January of 2021. The first interest payment is due in the fall of 2021 and it cannot be paid from the state unemployment trust fund, per federal law. To fund interest payments on repayable advances, the legislation also establishes a separate fund to house surcharge proceeds. The passage of this provision authorizes the Department of Unemployment Assistance to make this assessment but does not require the surcharge if interest is waived through future federal legislation."

Songs for the night

BELCHERTOWN – Christ Community Church, will be hosting an upcoming special service, "Songs for the Night."

This special gathering will offer an opportunity for attendees to remember loved ones who have gone home, seeking God's comfort in songs of worship and in his word. For those who grieve and all those who love them, the service will take place on Sunday, Jan. 10 at 6 p.m. People should sign up to attend on the church's website: www.graceforthe-way.org, to ensure there's enough space in the church to follow all social distancing guidelines. All social distancing and mask-wearing regulations will be in place.

For more information contact the church office at 413-253-0292 or office@graceforthe way.org located at 1255 Federal St, Belchertown.

2021 • from page 1

The Communications Committee and the Energy and Sustainability Committee were both created by the Selectboard in 2020.

Before the year's end, the members of the Energy and Sustainability Committee were appointed to their respective terms and will be meeting again beginning in January.

The members serving a three-year term ending June 30, 2024 are Patricia Krebs, Frank Byrne and John Piekara. The members serving a two-year term ending June 30, 2023 are Michael Potishnak and Todd Perry and the members serving a one-year term ending June 30, 2022 are

Joanne Collins and Jacob Robinson.

While the Communications Committee held one meeting towards the end of 2020, it has yet to establish its official membership.

In addition to these seven citizens, the director of the Department of Public Works, Steve Williams, as well as our director of Schools Buildings and Grounds, Eric Lebeau, have agreed to serve as 'ex-officio' members.

Health Director Judy Metcalf said the Health Department will continue to track COVID-19 cases in town as well as inform the public about the vaccination for the novel coronavirus which will become available to the public.

As of Dec. 27, the first phase of the vaccine was underway, with healthcare workers receiving the vaccine in order of priority.

According to the Massachusetts distribution timeline, phase one will be from Dec. 2020 to Feb. 2021. The first phase included clinical and non-clinical healthcare workers doing direct COVID-facing care, long-term care facilities, rest homes and assisted living facilities, police, fire and emergency medical services, congregate care settings (including corrections and shelters), home-based healthcare workers and then healthcare workers doing non-COVID-facing care.

Then from Feb. through April, phase two will consist of people with high risks for COVID-19 related complications, school, transit, grocery, utility, food and agriculture, sanitation, public works and public health workers and adults over 65.

Then in phase three, from April to June 2021, the vaccine will be available to the public.

Metcalf said there has been "lots of preparation work" in the form of mass immunization plans which were put into place in the past.

"We did H1N1 clinics and I am proud that we personally vaccinated a majority of the school children during the H1N1 outbreak," she said. "The current pandemic – a lot of the planning and structure was thrown out the window and restarted."

One of Metcalf's hopes in the near future is for a uniform message as she shifts to vaccination education for the public.

Metcalf added that a new public health nurse will begin in the district in the new year.

"Our previous nurse left in May and we've been without one for a long time," Metcalf said. "The nurse will be shared between Belchertown and Ware."

She said filling the position was a goal before she retires in the spring.

Metcalf, who is the third Quabbin Health District director, announced her retirement in October, saying her last day would be April 21, 2021, but she would be on the payroll until July 1.

A subcommittee was created in October to conduct a search and find candidates for the position with the hopes of having a chosen successor by March to allow for a month of overlap to allow Metcalf to train the new hire.

Another departing figure from Belchertown will be Belchertown Fire Chief Edward Bock, who is set to leave in May.

The tentative plan is to create a search committee to have an applicant selected by April.

Serving members of the committee would include Belchertown Police Chief Chris Pronovost, Department of Public Works Director Steve Williams, members of the community, a selectboard member, as proposed by the town administrator, who also offered to serve "ex-officio."

Following the posting, the search committee would assemble beginning in Jan. 2021, schedule preliminary interviews and move to a second round of interviews by the selectboard. Brougham said the goal is to have a person appointed in April 2021 "so there could be some overlap between the outgoing and incoming chiefs."

Granby

Similarly to its neighboring town of Belchertown, Granby will be in the process of finding a new fire chief to replace interim Chief Robert Czerwinski, who took over the position in the fall of 2020.

While the discussion of finding a permanent chief is preliminary, Granby Selectboard members have expressed interest in establishing a search committee to find a potential replacement.

Another leadership role in town is currently in the process of searching for a permanent replacement for interim Superintendent Carol Hepworth, who took over the district in July 2020.

Hepworth said the hope is to have her replacement start around the same time she did.

"We just sent out a survey to families and staff at GPS asking what they were looking for in a new superintendent," Hepworth said.

A search committee has already been established including members of the school's administration, School Committee members, the Granby Education Association, teachers, parents and a member of the Granby Selectboard.

Hepworth said she is proud of everything the schools have done to provide for the students in its district and said the efforts will continue into the new year, potentially including graduation.

"We had reverse parades and a really special graduation last year," Hepworth said. "One of the things that made it so special was the ability for the students to receive their diploma from someone important to them. The ceremony was outside in the parking lot. People liked it so much some have suggested that we have a similar ceremony this year."

An additional hope for the new calendar year is to get all of the students into the building for hybrid learning by the end of February, Hepworth said.

Students with high needs throughout the district are in hybrid learning, but grades three through six and nine through 12 still need to begin hybrid learning.

Hepworth said the schools have been working diligently to make that happen by installing HEPA filters into the high school, removing furniture to allow for six feet of social distancing and other measures.

"We've had some setbacks due to an increase in COVID-19 cases," Hepworth said. "But we're following guidelines. Kudos to our nurse leaders Nancy Jenks who has worked to make sure we know who the close contacts are and that people are quarantining."

What are you looking forward to in the new year? Share your resolutions and hopes for the new year to be published in the Sentinel, email Sentinel@turley.com.

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OPINION

EDITORIAL

Americans advised to stay home this holiday season

BY MARCEL GEMME

As the numbers start to come in after Thanksgiving, things are not looking good. The United States has averaged nearly 200,000 new confirmed COVID-19 cases a day over the last week. But according to Dr. Anthony Fauci, this isn't even the beginning of the full impact we're expected to see from the celebration of the most recent holiday.

The real numbers are expected to start pouring in soon, and December is shaping up to be the worst month so far for COVID-19 deaths and hospitalizations. The biggest victims? America's vulnerable senior population.

Health experts have long warned that the holiday season would bring a spike in coronavirus cases as people increasingly gather indoors. The CDC preemptively issued an online guide to safely celebrating the Holidays, with pages specific to upcoming celebrations. Right now, their "Winter Holidays" page appears to cover both Christmas and New Year's Celebrations.

The first thing that's being suggested is to stay home. Travel increases risk, so it is being advised against. And since it's looking like Americans collectively blew off suggested precautions over Thanksgiving, health experts are doubling down.

The Mayo Clinic has posted it's own COVID-19 holiday guide online, taking what appears to be a slightly less aggressive approach. Their main suggestions are geared towards how to best safely celebrate should you choose to do so, and things to consider when making this decision.

Since this issue is so sensitive and vital, major businesses have either elected or asked to help curb the virus's spread.

Those that aren't promoting and engaging in safe practices are finding themselves in hot water rapidly. Lives are at stake. For example, Airbnb recently announced its New Year's Eve Plan to Protect Public Health. Their first step will be to restrict specific booking requests that they view to be "suspicious" or indicate someone planning a party. These will mostly be last-minute, one or two night stays booked over New Year's Eve by guests that don't have an established, positive review history on their platform.

Next, the guests must attest that they will not throw an unauthorized party, or they may be pursued legally by Airbnb. Finally, the company will be operating a virtual command center to get ahead of any issues, along with trained safety agents on call throughout New Year's Eve.

In case you haven't gotten the message yet, this virus is not a joke. Things are getting worse, and people are not following what's needed to curb the spread. It's understandable that in this atmosphere, governmental instructions aren't heeded. But when health experts and private companies need to hold us accountable, and we still don't listen, we're in trouble.

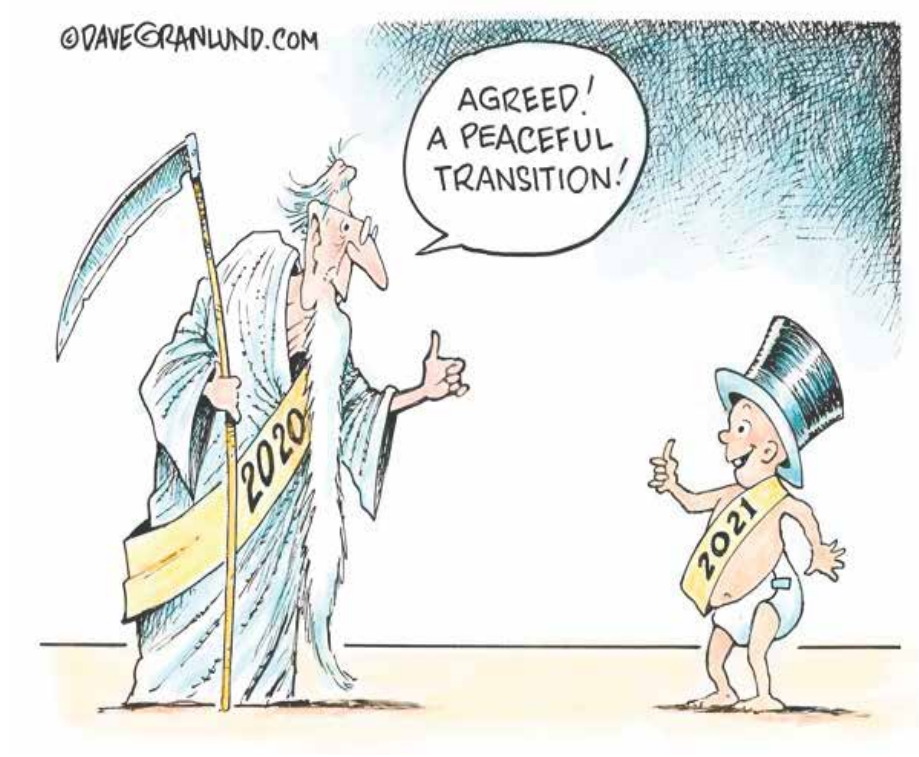
Thankfully, many preparations are underway to avoid a complete catastrophe. The New York City ball drop celebration has been all but canceled. There will still be a ball drop, but it will be broadcast virtually with no public attendance allowed. Compared to the previous year, the celebration will be desolate. Police will block off Time Square on New Year's Eve. But while canceling major events like this is an excellent first step towards getting things under control, more needs to be done.

We can keep trying to police everyone and get them to do the right thing, but it's not a very successful approach. In Oregon, Governor Kate Brown issued a "freeze" order before Thanksgiving, limiting bars and restaurants to takeout-only. In response, The Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association and the Restaurant Law Center filed a lawsuit claiming the executive order was discriminatory.

Conflicts like these have frequently been politically fueled, leading to a lack of understanding. But for understanding to happen, there must first be a willingness. And while many believe they already know everything there is to know about COVID-19, perhaps the only thing not grasped is its reality.

It doesn't have to happen to you for it to be real. It's not a conspiracy. Hospitals across the nation are filled with dying COVID-19 patients. Many of them are seniors who are family members and loved ones of people that weren't cautious. Let's start the New Year off right by not spreading disease.

Marcel Gemme has dedicated his life to helping others find help. He focuses his attention on helping individuals find long-term Senior Care through his journalism, community outreach, and his website, ECDOL.org. Excellent Care, Decency, and Optimal Living are what he aims to bring to individuals looking for care options for themselves or their aging loved ones.



LETTERS

Jabish Brook thanks school community

To The Editor:

Jabish Brook Middle School would like to extend its sincerest appreciation to our school community. The staff, students, faculty, administration, parents and guardians of JBMS have come together during unprecedented challenges to provide the best possible programs and services for our middle school students. It has been through the cooperative effort of our school community that JBMS has been able to continue to provide a positive and productive learning environment to our students. We are indebted to our community for their dedication and commitment to this mission, and appreciative for your cooperation and perseverance to support our school.

We are very proud to be part of a community that has worked so hard for the benefit of our students and staff under such circumstances.

From the faculty and staff at Jabish Brook Middle School

Thanks for supporting Toys for Town

Dear community members,

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the Belchertown community during the holiday season. The overwhelming support that the Toys for Town program received this year helped spread the holiday cheer to many families and children in Belchertown. Toy drives were held all over town with the common goal of being able to give back to families in need. Without your kindness and generosity, we would not be able to do help so many local families.

Thank you again and see you next year,
Santa's helpers

GUEST COLUMN

Will my U.K. pension affect my Social Security?

RUSSELL GLOOR
Guest columnist

Dear Rusty: I lived and worked in the United Kingdom prior to coming to the U.S. at age 45, which qualified me for a U.K. State Pension worth the equivalent of about $740 U.S. dollars per month. Since moving to the U.S. I have contributed to the U.S. Social Security system for 14 years and my estimated U.S. Social Security benefit is $1,643 per month. I have heard about something called "WEP" and must be honest and say I don't fully understand. Can you provide some advice or references so I can understand what happens to these sums when I retire? I don't have any other pension income, so understanding these numbers is important. FYI, I hold both U.S. and U.K. passports and will retire in the U.S.A. *Signed: Blessed from the UK*

Dear Blessed: The "WEP" provision you refer to is known as the "Windfall Elimination Provision." It affects anyone who is eligible to collect Social Security benefits, but who also has a pension from another entity (corporation, public agency, or foreign country) which did not participate in the U.S. Social Security program (meaning that SS FICA payroll taxes weren't paid during that employment). WEP will reduce your U.S. Social Security benefit by using a special formula to compute your benefit amount. Generally, the WEP reduction is determined either by the number of years of substantial Social Security covered earnings that you have, or the WEP maximums (one of which is that your U.S. Social Security can't be reduced by more than half of your non-covered pension). With less than 20 years paying into the U.S. system, you will incur one of the maximum WEP reductions.

Something else important to understand is that the current estimate you have from Social Security doesn't include the WEP reduction. That estimate assumes that you will continue to earn at your current level until you reach your full retirement age. You haven't shared your birthdate, but from your email I assume you are now about 60-years-old. I

f you were born in 1959, your full retirement age (FRA) for U.S. Social Security purposes is 66 years and 10 months (if you were born after that your FRA is 67, and if you were born before that subtract 2 months for each year prior to 1959). Your FRA is when you will get your "full" Social Security benefit. If you claim before that (age 62 is the earliest you can claim) your benefit will be reduced (even before WEP), and if you wait beyond your FRA you'll earn Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs) which will increase your benefit amount. DRCs stop at age 70.

See **SOCIAL SECURITY,** page 12 •

Turley Publications Letters to the Editor Policy

Letters to the editor should be 350 words or less in length. No unsigned or anonymous opinions will be published. We require letter writers to include his or her town of residence and home telephone number. We must authenticate authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous or contain unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, defamation of character and offensive language. All unknown or alleged facts and quotations offered by the author need to cite credible, unbiased sources. Send letters to: Sentinel Editor Melina Bourdeau, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069 or via email to sentinel@turley.com. The deadline for submissions is Friday at 5 p.m.

Belchertown, Granby & Amherst
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COMMUNITY

BCA receives $10,000 grant

STAFF REPORT

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Cultural Alliance was one of 21 projects to receive a Public Art for Spatial Justice grant for the 2021 fiscal year. The PASJ grants support artists and artistic collaborations to create public art in Massachusetts that fosters public imagination and contributes to more just futures for our public spaces and public culture. Grants range from $5,000 to 10,000.

The Belchertown Cultural Alliance proudly supports Belchertown State School survivor and artist James Blackmore, in collaboration with other former BSS residents in the creation of a public art installation at the site of the former Belchertown State School.

The New England Foundation for the Arts announced the recipients of two new grant opportunities for Massachusetts-based artists and collaborators to imagine and create public art that fosters more just, vibrant and welcoming public spaces.

The BCA project is "Public Art for Reflection: the former Belchertown State School" which received $10,000 in grant funding.

The Belchertown Cultural Alliance proudly supports Belchertown State School survivor and artist James Blackmore, in collaboration with other former BSS residents in the creation of a public art installation at the site of the former Belchertown State School. By creating a platform for expression for some of those harmed and disenfranchised by this space, this body of work will be a step towards justice for the site.

The installation will aim to connect the community of BSS survivors and Belchertown residents so that together they can tackle the legacy of the Belchertown State School and support development towards more just futures.

Artist James Blackmore is one artist who is part of the upcoming Belchertown Cultural Alliance Project "Public Art for Reflection: the Former Belchertown State School."

"This project is just a piece of a larger umbrella project titled Walk of Reflection: Belchertown State School, which in addition to James Blackmore's work will also include a historical book walk featuring work by historians Katherine Anderson and Ed Orzechowski, a performance piece produced by the Rainbow Players, and an art installation produced by Community Options," said BCA President April Jasak-Bangs.

"In the midst of the global health pandemic, economic downturn, and continued racial injustice that 2020 has made more apparent, we are reminded that public spaces are not neutral and public art made in public spaces is not neutral either. As we reckon with complex histories and continued legacies of racism and white supremacy culture, we refocused our public art grantmaking towards spatial justice."

said Kim Szeto, NEFA public art program director, "Public art has the ability and responsibility to creatively engage important and timely conversations, bring healing to space and place, and foster public imagination for a more just version of what is possible."

NEFA's Spatial Justice grants are made possible with funding from the Barr Foundation. "This moment is crying out for artists who can help us imagine a better world," said Giles Li, the Barr Foundation's Senior Program Officer for Arts & Creativity. "We are proud to partner with NEFA to support these important artists and vital communities; their work forces us to confront our own assumptions about who feels welcomed in public spaces and reaffirms what the Foundation deeply believes: that all people deserve the honor of being heard, seen, and valued."

Submissions for town report cover sought

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Selectboard is seeking artwork and/or photographs by town residents to be considered for the cover of the 2020 Annual Town Report.

Artwork or photographs relating to Belchertown must be vertical, and preferably no smaller than 5" x 7", and suitable for reproduction.

Please include your name, address and telephone number on the back. Once submitted, the artwork/photograph becomes the property of the Town of Belchertown.

Submissions for consideration should be forwarded to the Selectmen's Office, The Finnerty House, One South Main Street, P.O. Box 670, Belchertown, MA 01007 no later than noon on Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2021.

Immaculate Heart of Mary to host dinner

GRANBY – The Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Granby would like to thank the community for coming out to its Veteran's Pork Roast dinner which was held on Sunday, Nov. 15, 2020. The Parish received great feedback and it is hoped that everyone who participated found the whole process easy and pain free during this pandemic. Mark your calendars because the church's next event will be a Roast Beef dinner and it is scheduled for April 11, 2021.

The plan is to have pick up from 3 to 5 p.m. at the rear of the church, while following current Board of Health protocols.

More information will be forthcoming when the event gets closer, especially if indoor seating will be allowed. Those still participating in social distancing will have the opportunity to have takeout.

For further information, call the Parish office at 413-467-9821.

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EDUCATION

Belchertown children's meals program menu

For the week of Jan. 4 to 8
Note: Tuesday through Thursday are small meal kit items

Monday: Cohort A
Breakfast: banana bread and 100% juice.
Lunch: pasta and meatballs, steamed broccoli and fruit.

Tuesday: Cohort A
(curbside meal kit pickup, only Belchertown High School, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.)

Breakfast: apple frudel and fruit.
Lunch: grades 7 to 12 oven roasted chicken, grades K to 6 chicken tenders, died carrots, mashed potatoes and a dinner roll.

Wednesday
Remote learning day, no in school meals

Thursday: Cohort B
Breakfast: mini-waffles and fruit.
Lunch: BBQ chicken sandwich, fries and fruit.

Friday: Cohort B
(Small meal kits come home and orders due today)
Breakfast: cereal bar, yogurt and 100% fruit juice.
Lunch: cheese pizza, Caesar salad and school-baked cookie.

Note
Pre-k and Kindergarten will offer a daily in-school alternative choice: Muffin, yogurt, vegetable, fruit, and milk
Grades 1 though 6 will offer a daily in-school alternate choice: Sunbutter and Jelly sandwich, vegetable, fruit and milk
Grades 7 to 12 will offer daily in-school alternative choices: pizza station, deli bar and pre-made salads

College NOTES

Hunter Juras from Amherst achieves fall 2020 Dean's List at Belmont University

NASHVILLE, TN – Hunter Juras qualified for the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Belmont University. Eligibility is based on a minimum course load of 12 hours and a quality grade point average of 3.5 with no grade below a C.

Approximately 55 percent of Belmont's students this semester qualified for the Fall 2020 Dean's List. Belmont Provost Dr. Thomas Burns said, "Achieving the recognition of Dean's List during the Fall 2020 semester is an extraordinary achievement. While we are always impressed with students' who are able to achieve this high level of recognition in their academic endeavors, those students that reached this mark in Fall 2020 demonstrated incredible diligence and commitment to their academic work during very unusual and stressful circumstances. We are so pleased to be able to recognize their efforts and our hope is that these students will continue investing in their studies to equip them for a lifetime of learning and service."

Thy Ton-Morrison Inducted into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi

BATON ROUGE, LA – Thy Ton-Morrison of Granby, was recently initiated into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective all-discipline collegiate honor society. Ton-Morrison was initiated at MCPHS University.

Ton-Morrison is among approximately 30,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni to be initiated into Phi Kappa Phi each year. Membership is by invitation only and requires nomination and approval by a chapter. Only the top 10 percent of seniors and 7.5 percent of juniors are eligible for membership. Graduate students in the top 10 percent of the number of candidates for graduate degrees may also qualify, as do faculty, professional staff and alumni who have achieved scholarly distinction.

Lawrenceville School Graduate Owen Oulundsen earns dean's award with distinction at Colgate University

HAMILTON, NY – Owen Oulundsen, a member of the Colgate University Class of 2023, has earned the spring 2020 Dean's Award with Distinction.

Oulundsen is an Economics major from Belchertown, and is a graduate of the Lawrenceville School.

Students who receive a term grade point average of 3.6 or higher while completing at least three courses during the spring 2020 semester earn the Dean's Award with Distinction.

Colgate is a leading American university for students who want classes with rigor, faculty with passion, and confidence in knowing they will learn how to thrive in work and life. Colgate offers 56 majors and supports 25 Division I athletic teams on a campus of about 3,000 students in central New York.

Students of the quarter announced

BELCHERTOWN – The following students received Student of the Quarter for the first quarter of the year at Jabish Brook Middle School. Grade-level teams selected these students for demonstrating outstanding perseverance and earning 70s or above in all of their classes during the first quarter of the year.

Quarter one

Seventh grade
Brooklyn Keeler
Devynn Strange
Bryannah Auger
Piper Ripley
Jillian Harper
Ryan Gould
Mackenzie Burch
Alexa Karabetsos
Jordan Kalish
Morgan Delude
Sofia Cafone
Amanda Murray
Josh Reynolds
Molly Mazzafero
Mya Philpott
Brennan Real
Ava Rodrigues

Eighth grade
Aliza Hayward
Josselyn Whalen
Kamilah Acosta-Morales
Daniel Hulmes
Matthew Allen
Gavin Boisjolie
Jordan Wetherell
Jack Bergeron
Varvara Sas
Madyson Burns
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Jackson Benedetti
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GRANBY

First quarter Honor Roll at Granby Jr Sr High School

STAFF REPORT

GRANBY – Granby Jr. Sr. High School would like to extend congratulations to those students who achieved Honor Roll for the first quarter of the 2020-2021 school year:

Seventh grade maximum honors – Brandon Chatel, Kaitlyn Curran, Benjamin French, Braeden Gallagher, Addison Gardner, Braydon LaDuke, Myli Laliberte-Witaszek, Ava-Elizabeth Loughman, Keith Patterson and Noah Rodriguez.

Seventh grade high honors – Emma Beaulieu, Lea Charest, Thomas DeWitt, Edward Dziok, Durant Garden, Daniel Hackett, Karina Huertas Guzman, Annalise Patterson, Riley Pierce, Faith Ramos, Taylor Santos and Stephen Szlosek.

Seventh grade honors – Ariana Beaulieu, Chase Clark, Brodie Funk, Jake Gagnon, Michaela Manegio, Allison Maslak, Gabriel Petelle and Anthony Santiago.

Eighth grade maximum honors - Jena Abbott, Nathan Benson, Mabel Carillon, Margaret Crawford, Cassandra Flaherty, Cole Fuller, Madison Lacasse, Alexis Lapite, Gavin Moreno, Jack Ouellette, Owen Randall, Autumn Sicard, Austin Smith and Stewart Szlosek.

Eighth grade high honors - Aiden Beach, Brennan Dwyer, Gavin Kennedy, Cameron LeBlanc, Ava McFarland, Tristan Moe, Emma Parsons, Makayla Trudell, Molly Zumbruski

Eighth grade honors – Sawyer Clarke, Zachariah Dowd, Ethan Fournier, Shaylin Hauschild, Brianna Houghton, Cheyenne Laramee and Maxwell Seymour.

Ninth grade maximum honors – Ciara Charest, Rhea Gagnon, Nicolas Grandmont, Jessica Holubowich, Cindy Kusumo, Sara Lessard, Neil Lindberg, Tia Looney, Corey Rondeau, Grace Roy, David Silchuk, Michael Swanigan and Emily Tremblay.

Ninth grade high honors - Zachary Auclair, Brandie Dumais, Peyton Justin, Colin Murdock and Phillip Silchuk.

Ninth grade honors – Benjamin Berger, Madison Bombard, Chloe Castro, Kamdyn Lopez, Keira McKinnon, Nikolas Misiaszek and Noel Summerlin.

Tenth grade maximum honors – Elizabeth Adamites, Michael Arabik, Markus Baran, Alexis Bogdanovich, Joshua Chateauneuf, Patrick French, Madyson Gaj, Logan Gallagher, Rebecca Gavel, Emma Hall, Nolan Hall, Jack Hartling, Olivia Hauschild, Abigail Huebner, Brady Pete, Katherine Vallee and Robert Walsh.

Tenth grade high honors - Eva Bartosz, Samuel Braese, Griffin Funk, Matthew Gancarz, Paul Lucchesi IV and Grace Parsons.

Tenth grade honors – Thomas Carriere, James Curran-Jeffers, Abigail Feldman, Alexander Galusha, Kody Laramee, Max Lempke, Frank Manegio III, Lauren Parker, Hao Pham and Carter White.

Eleventh grade maximum – Joseph Boyington, Dana Chateauneuf, Gianna DiRico, Emily Frank, Ariana Klekotka, Emma Klekotka, Cooper Looney, Tegan Maclure, Karlie Moriarty, Claire Rondeau, Tyler Sudsbury and Kristen Trembley.

Eleventh grade high honors – Gabriel Arabik, Connor Asselin, Alyson Barsalou, Nathan C Breault, Liam Brown, William Burke, Liberty Conlin, Paige Galusha, Sienna Hill, Arash Karamshahi, Kayla Klekotka, Dylan Laramee, Jenna Lashway, Jason Moura, Katrina Pelchat, Eric Puffer, Madison Seaha, Rhaegan Sheehan, Jordyn Sicard, Briana Sosa, Raymond Toth, Gabrielle Walz and Brandon Wishart.

Eleventh grade honors – Evan Anderson, Alexis Ariza, Nathan J Breault, Casey Funk, Nathan Grandmont, Isaiah Mejias, Edward O'Grady, Declan Otto, Kaitlyn Ouellette, Alaina Shippee and Michael Toth.

Twelfth grade maximum – Zachary Couture, Kyra Dimitropolis, Gabriel Godard, Kyla Grenier, Dakota LeClair, Dylan Moriarty, Nicolette Nickless, Nicholas Parker, Eric Rakowski, Faith Roy, Nolan Sullivan, Emily Vallee and Rosalynn Vollbrecht.

Twelfth grade high honors - Dylan Holubowich, Aidan Johnson, Jenna Learned, Dylan LeClair, Steven Pisano, Landon Roy, Tyler Sabourin and Niki Sharma.

Twelfth grade honors - Michael Collins, Efrain Knightly, Edward Kusumo, Evan Normand, Frachesca Ortiz, Nicholas Pennington, Josuet Torres, Steven Torres, Jr. and Jovany Velez.

Upcoming events at the Granby library

GRANBY – The following are upcoming events at the Granby Public Library.

Make and take bags at the Granby Library and CFCE Zoom Playgroup

People are invited to join the playgroup on Zoom, stop by for a MAKE AND TAKE to go with it, or just pick up a make and take bag.

Each week, join Marti, the playgroup facilitator from 10 to 11 a.m., for sensory play, stories, songs and take and make crafts from the library.

Below are the playgroup dates. The take and make bags will be available at the library Tuesday through Friday of the week prior in library lobby 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

For the Zoom link, email Marti at mweichman@collaborative.org.

Zoom playgroup dates and make and take bag and story theme

Jan. 5: The mitten make and take mitten and animal craft based on the "The Mitten" by Jan Brett. (Pick up for the make and take bags will be from Dec. 29 to 31.)

Jan. 12: The hat make and take play dough hedgehog craft, just like the hedgehog from "The Hat" by Jan Brett. (Pick up for the make and take bags will be from Jan. 5 to 8.)

Jan. 19: Snowman – create your own with cotton balls and hear a snowman story. (Pick up for the make and take bag will be from Jan. 12 to 15.)

Jan. 26: Snowflakes, let it snow! Design your own snowflakes with cotton swabs. We'll read a snowflake story. (Pick up for the make and take bag will be from Jan. 19 from 22.)

BUSINESS

Local real estate agent earns prestigious awards

BELCHERTOWN – Despite significant impact on the way real estate is bought and sold as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic, real estate agents have pivoted to ensure that transactions continue to be closed in a safe and responsible manner.

Those local professionals who were best able to adapt to the change and provide exceptional service to their clients were honored recently for outstanding achievement by EXIT Realty Corp. International during a special awards presentation broadcast throughout the U.S. and Canada:

• Rhiannon Gresty, Franchisee with EXIT Real Estate Executives in Belchertown was honored with the Bronze Award by EXIT Realty Corp. International. The award was given in recognition of closing between 20 and 39 real estate transaction sides during the production year July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.

"Real estate professionals who can quickly and effectively adapt to any shifting market conditions - even one as unusual as this - will thrive," said Tami Bonnell, CEO, EXIT Realty Corp. International. "It is because of the dedication and hard work of our team that we have continued to grow throughout the U.S. and Canada. We are proud of their service to the community and of their well-earned accomplishments and extend our warmest congratulations."

About EXIT Realty

EXIT Realty is a company founded and built on human potential. A full service, forward-thinking, real estate franchisor with offices across North America, EXIT has to-date paid out more than a half a billion dollars in single-level residual income to its associates. The Expert Marketing Suite(tm) including geolocation Smart Sign(tm) technology gives sellers an edge in a competitive marketplace. The Focus on Good Health blog promotes wellness at work and home. A portion of every transaction fee received by EXIT Realty Corp. International is applied to its charitable fund. To-date, more than $6 million has been pledged to charity. For more information, please visit www.exitrealty.com and www.joinexitrealty.com.

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USDA INSP. FRESH ASSORTED PORK CHOPS $1.44 lb
USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS PORK BUTT STRIPS $1.88 lb
USDA INSP. FRESH PORK SPARE RIBS TWIN PAK $2.44 lb
SLICED IN OUR DELI
USDA INSP TURKEY BREAST $3.88 lb
TAIL GATE SPECIALS
USDA INSP STORE MADE ITALIAN MARINATED BONELESS CHICKEN BREASTS $2.29 lb
USDA INSP FROZEN PORK TENDERLOIN $1.79 ea
USDA INSP STORE MADE TEXAS BBQ MARINATED BONELESS PORK BUTT STRIPS $2.29 lb
USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF STRIPLOIN CUT FREE $3.99 lb WHOLE OR HALF
USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF TOP ROUND ROAST or STEAKS $3.33 lb
USDA INSP. GROUND FRESH DAILY 80% LEAN GROUND BEEF $3.67 lb 7 lb. bag
SALE DATES: 12/31/20 - 1/6/21
USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS & SKINLESS CHICKEN BREAST 10 LB BAG 99¢ lb
USDA INSP. FROZEN CHICKEN LEG 1/4S 10 LB BAG $2.99 ea
USDA INSP. FRESH CHICKEN THIGHS BONE-IN 10 LB BAG 69¢ lb
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SPORTS

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Pathfinder approved for winter sports

TIM PETERSON
Sports Correspondent

PALMER—After dealing with no COVID-19 related issues during the recently completed fall sports season, the athletic department at Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School is planning on having a winter sports season.

"All of our student-athletes were very excited to get back on the field again this fall with their friends and coaches," said Pathfinder Athletic Director Joe Baldyga during the school committee meeting held on December 16. "We did manage to get through the fall season without any COVID related incidents regarding athletics."

Following a lengthy discussion, the Pathfinder school committee did pass a motion to allow the winter sports season to go on as scheduled.

The Pioneers boys' and girls' basketball teams are scheduled to play about ten games against neighboring high schools. However, none of those games will be taking place inside the Pathfinder gymnasium, which is currently being used as a cafeteria.

"It would be very difficult for us to host any basketball games due to the circumstances our gym is in right now," Baldyga said. "We're planning on playing games at our opponent's gyms. We'll also be holding practices at outside venues."

Wrestling is normally another winter sport held at Pathfinder, but that sport was moved by the MIAA to the newly created Fall II season.

A committee member did ask Baldyga about the possibility of moving basketball to the Fall II season, which is slated to run from late February until the end of April.

"Most high schools in the area are trying to get the winter sports season in during the traditional winter season," Baldyga said. "The MIAA did move wrestling to Fall II. If we also moved basketball to that season, I'm not sure there would be any teams for us to compete against at that point. We would need three or four other schools to compete against during the Fall II season."

The first practice of the high school basketball season is scheduled to take place on January 11. The season is slated to end on March 1 without a postseason tournament being held.

"It'll be about half of a regular basketball season," Baldyga added. "We'll also be playing opponents similar to those our soccer teams played in the fall."

Pathfinder High School was able to play fall sports outdoors successfully. This winter, basketball has been approved, but Pathfinder's gymnasium is not available for home games.

FILE PHOTOS

Pathfinder finds itself without a home court heading into the season.

The teams in the Pathfinder basketball bubble are scheduled to be Palmer, Ware, Monson, and Hampden Charter.

The Lady Pioneers, who are coached by Kevin Aldrich, finished with a 12-9 overall record a year ago. Their season came to an end following a loss at Franklin Tech in a Western Mass. Division 4 tournament. The girls' varsi-

See **PATHFINDER,** page 11 •

Rollback will 'not affect winter sports'

GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – In a statement released last week by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, the rollback plan by Gov. Charlie Baker will not affect winter sports.

Baker's plan decreases capacities in most businesses and other venues, as well as the indoor gathering size being shrunk to just 10 people.

Because of COVID-19 surges that have occurred over the last two months, Baker has strengthened mask mandates, and scaled back business, and has established an attempt at a curfew by closing restaurants at 9:30, shutting down alcohol sales at the same time, and issuing a stay-at-home advisory from 10 p.m. to 5 p.m.

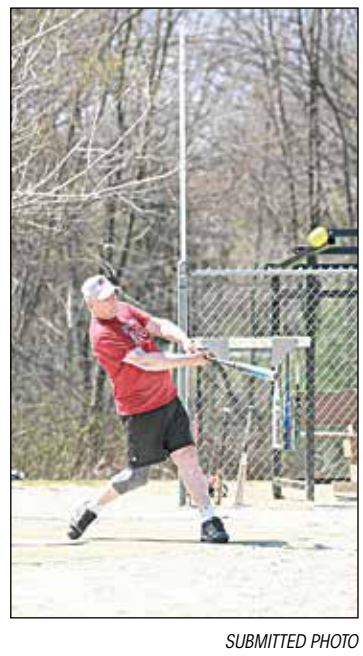
The advisory will likely affect game times for the winter season, but the sports that will be allowed for the winter season will still go on despite the restrictions. It is also possible some of the restrictions will be lifted as the season goes on.

Tara Bennett, director of communications for the MIAA, said the Massachusetts Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has been in touch with the MIAA regarding Baker's rollback of the "re-opening" of Massachusetts.

"The office (EEA) confirmed with the MIAA that Gov.

See **WINTER,** page 11 •

Relics able to get through 2020 season



SUBMITTED PHOTO

More than 170 players were able to be a part of the league in 2020.

LUDLOW – The Western Mass Relics, which is a Senior Softball League, that's been in existence since 1994, was faced this Spring with the possibility of their season being canceled due to the Coronavirus. With the season questionable and the Relics always concerned for player safety, the Relics worked closely with the Board of Health, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Town of Ludlow and The Fish and Game Club to be one of the few sports leagues in Western Mass to play a full schedule.

The Western Mass Relics had 176 players agree to play and fortunately not one person came down with the Coronavirus. Among the steps taken to play safely were the following:

* Temperatures were taken upon arrival. The players had to record a temperature below 100 degrees.

* Players were required to wear masks in the field.

* Social distancing was observed when a team was batting. Players brought lawn chairs to accomplish this.

* There was no tagging out a player. All plays were considered a force play.

* Handshaking and fist pumps wasn't allowed.

* Bats were wiped down and handled by the barrel.

* New balls were frequently changed.

* Spectators weren't allowed initially, but later in the season were allowed to watch the game from the parking lot.

The Western Mass Relics are looking forward to the 2021 season and welcome all new players. For further information go to their website: westernmassrelics.org.

SPORTS

Pioneers to host Pelham clinic

LUDLOW – Western United Pioneers FC is excited to offer a soccer clinic in Pelham, MA for players in the Massachusetts North Region. The fall clinic provides off-season training and skill development by WUP FC coaches. There are two sessions available. sign up for one or both. It makes a great holiday gift for friends and family members.

This program is offered to boys and girls born in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014. The four-week program includes one practice per week for a total of $65 per session ($130 for 2 sessions). Sessions will consist of a max of 15 players per field (COVID regulation for the players' safety).

SESSION 1: MONDAYS 1/11, 1/25, 2/1, & 2/8

Boys and Girls Born 2013 and 2014: Session is at 5 p.m.

Boys and Girls Born 2010, 2011, and 2012: Session is at 6 p.m.

SESSION 2: MONDAYS 2/22, 3/1, 3/8, & 3/15

Boys and Girls Born 2013 and 2014: Session is at 5 p.m.

Boys and Girls Born 2010, 2011, and 2012: Session is at 6 p.m.

The sessions will be held at Pelham Elementary School at 45 Amherst Road, Pelham, MA 01002.

PATHFINDER • from page 10

ty hoop team did squeak out an exciting 36-35 home win over Hampden Charter last January. They didn't face either Palmer, Monson, or Ware.

The Pathfinder boys' varsity basketball squad, who's coached by David Oliveira, won a total of seven games last winter. They did face Monson twice and Hampden Charter once, which were all losses.

Just like during the soccer season, all of the players, coaches, and referees will be required to wear masks on the court. The players will also have to wear them on the bench, but a mask free area will be set-up in each gymnasium. The spectators, who will mainly be the home team parents, will also have to wear masks.

"We're going to try to do everything that we can do to keep our players and coaches as safe as possible Baldyga said. "We do follow a daily protocol list and the MIAA has also made several rule modifications this year."

There won't be a jump ball held at the start of the game or overtime. A coin toss will determine which team will get the ball first.

When a player inbounds the ball, the closet defender will be six feet away. No player will be allowed to inbound the ball on the baseline.

There will be no halftime. The breaks at the end of each quarter will last 2:30. Timeouts will be 1:15 each.

Teams will not be allowed to have more than 15 players and no more than three coaches on a bench for a game.

Things will probably be changing on a daily basis just like they have since last March, but the members of the Pathfinder boys' and girls' basketball teams are hoping to play some games this winter.

Hall of Fame announces eligible candidates for the Class of 2021

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame today announced the list of eligible candidates for the Class of 2021, including first-time nominees Doug Collins, Michael Cooper, Howard Garfinkel, Lou Henson, Paul Pierce, Val Ackerman, Yolanda Griffith and Lauren Jackson.

Returning to the ballot are fan-favorite nominees Chauncey Billups, Chris Bosh, Richard Hamilton, Bob Huggins, Ben Wallace, Chris Webber, Jay Wright, Swin Cash and Becky Hammon among others.

A first look at the list of eligible nominees was provided by The Jump on ESPN, hosted by Rachel Nichols, and Class of 2021 nominee Paul Pierce. A complete list of eligible candidates can be found attached.

Following the Hall of Fame's traditional timeline, Finalists from the North American and Women's committee for the Class of 2021 will be announced in the timeframe of NBA All-Star Weekend, which is scheduled for early March. The entire Class of 2021, including those selected by the direct elect committees, will be unveiled in the timeframe of the NCAA Final Four scheduled for early April. Event details are forthcoming, and the announcement timeline is subject to change.

The Class of 2021 Enshrinement ceremony is scheduled to take place in Springfield, Mass., in September 2021. As previously announced, the Class of 2020 Enshrinement ceremony has been rescheduled and relocated due to COVID-19 and is scheduled for May 13-15, 2021 at Mohegan Sun.

Tickets for the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame Class of 2020 and 2021 Enshrinement ceremonies and various events surrounding the ceremonies will be on-sale at a later date. For the latest news and updates, follow @hoophall on Twitter and Instagram.

AHL season delayed to February

SPRINGFIELD – American Hockey League President and CEO Scott Howson has announced that the league's Board of Governors has approved moving the anticipated start date of the 2020-21 season to Feb. 5, 2021, due to the ongoing COVID-19 public health crisis.

The AHL continues to work with its member clubs to monitor developments and local guidelines in all 31 league cities. Further details regarding the 2020-21 American Hockey League season are still to be determined.

In operation since 1936, the AHL serves as the top development league for all 31 National Hockey League teams. Nearly 90 percent of today's NHL players are American Hockey League graduates, and more than 100 honored members of the Hockey Hall of Fame spent time in the AHL in their careers.

WINTER • from page 10

Baker's announcement on Dec. 22 of rollbacks on certain sectors will not have an impact on high school athletics."

As a result of that confirmation, no further restrictions will be added to the EEA's release of workplace safety and re-opening standards for businesses and other entities providing youth and adult amateur sports activities.

The EEA has been responsible for issuing the guidance utilized by the MIAA to conduct sports safely during the coronavirus pandemic, which is hopefully nearing its end.

The EEA is mandating mask-wearing in all sport environments where it is possible to wear masks. There will also be limitations to the numbers of players and personnel allowed at basketball courts and hockey rinks during the winter season. In order to reduce potential for crowds, there will be no winter tournaments. The pandemic cancelled the end of the winter state basketball tournament last March. There has not been an MIAA-sanctioned tournament game since that time, and it is unknown when there will be a tournament game, though the spring season is a definite possibility as a return to normalcy could be realized by June.

Winter sports in Western Massachusetts are supposed to begin for most schools following the New Year's holiday on Jan. 4. Games could begin on or around Jan. 14. Basketball, hockey, and swimming are supposed to take place with indoor track being moved to the bubble season and wrestling could potentially take place in the spring season.

MIAA signs deal with University Orthopedics

FRANKLIN – The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) has signed a multi-year partnership with University Orthopedics to become an Official Orthopedics Provider of the MIAA. The partnership coincides with the Feb. 1 opening of University's first Massachusetts location in Mansfield.

The partnership will initially be focused on the southeastern part of the state, with University Orthopedics supporting MIAA events taking place in Districts 7, 8 and 9. University will also serve as the Presenting Sponsor of all upcoming MIAA South Sectional Tournaments.

"We are excited to partner with an organization like the MIAA that provides such an important role in the lives of thousands of student athletes and their families. With our new location in Mansfield, we look forward to serving these communities and growing our partnership in the years to come," said Edward Akelman, MD, President of University Orthopedics.

"The health and safety of our Association's 230,000 student-athletes participating at our 376 member schools is paramount to our mission," said Bill Gaine, Executive Director of the MIAA. "The opportunity to enhance that mantra with the expertise and support of University Orthopedics is a welcomed and valued gift." Through this partnership, University will provide video content related to safe training methods, recovery and other orthopedic health measures. The new UOI Facility is located at 10 Reservoir Street in Mansfield.

Follow Turley Sports on Instagram

Turley Publications sports department has recently joined Instagram. You can find our account by searching "turleysports." We will regularly feature samples of photos that you will see in our publications on a weekly basis. Please follow and share with your friends and loved ones. We will be featuring photos from all 11 of our sports sections in the coming weeks, but as always, you can see all the photos that appear by subscribing to your local paper or picking up a copy in your community.

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NEWS & FEATURES
As a paper of record, we attempt to cover all general news, personality profiles, and community features that we know about. This includes all selectmen and school committee meetings as well as spot planning board, board of health, finance, and other town meetings determined by the issue's relevance to our readers. There are the annual major community event features that we should always cover, but we are more than open to suggestions of other features to celebrate the fabric of our communities and their many interesting occupants. Our loyal advertisers provide funding for this paid staff coverage.
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POLICE LOGS

Belchertown Police

Editor's note: The following are brief explanations of select entries in the Belchertown Police log and arrests for the weeks of Dec. 16 through Dec. 22. The information was provided by a member of the police department based on the review of the detailed log summary. This feature is designed to provide context and explanation to some of the calls police respond to every day. Of the 251 calls police responded to, there were 15 incidents, six accidents, two arrest/summons and seven citations.

ARRESTS/SUMMONS
Friday, Dec. 18

7:38 a.m. – Two 18-year-old Belchertown men were issued summons for negligent operation of a motor vehicle.

The Belchertown School Resource officer received a report of two vehicles drifting in the senior parking lot of the school. Two individuals were identified by staff, who told the officer the main office has received calls as well. The two vehicles were sliding around the parking lot near several vehicles and driving in an erratic manner. Based on the calls, camera footage of the incident and several vehicles in area, the two individuals were issued a summons.

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS
Wednesday Dec. 16

9:01 a.m. – Officer took report of a stolen bicycle.

1:33 p.m. – Officers responded to a residence for a mental health crisis.

2:14 p.m. – An officer spoke with a Mill Valley Rd. resident concerning a package that was found. The officer spoke with the reporting party who said they found the empty package across the cemetery on the side of the road. The packages were addressed to a Franklin St. resident. There were no reports of a lost package. It was also trash day, so it was not able to be determined if the items in the package were stolen or if the empty package was simply thrown out. There is no further information at this time.

11:50 p.m. – Officers responded to a one vehicle accident on Bay Rd. The operator of the vehicle said they hit black ice in the roadway and lost control of the vehicle. The vehicle drifted across the south bound lane, spun around and came to rest against a tree. The vehicle was towed from the scene. No injuries were reported.

Thursday, Dec. 17

6:25 p.m. – Belchertown officers responded to assist Belchertown Fire and paramedics for a report of an incapacitated female.

Friday, Dec. 18

10:30 a.m. – Officers responded to a residence for a report of an out of control youth. Officers spoke with the child and the SRO was notified of the incident and will follow up with them at a later point.

12:33 p.m. – Officers took a report of unemployment fraud.

12:33 p.m. – An officer responded to a local bank for an attempted breaking and entering incident into an ATM. The incident is under investigation.

4:22 p.m.– Officers responded to Chauncey Walker Rd for a one vehicle accident. The operator was heading eastbound on Chauncey Walker Rd when they reached for their cell phone, losing control of the vehicle. The vehicle stuck a poll. The vehicle was towed to the operator's residence. No injuries were reported. The operator was cited for impeded operation of a motor vehicle.

6:13 p.m. – An officer spoke with an individual about ongoing custody issues.

Saturday, Dec. 19

1:01 a.m. – Officers responded to an apartment complex for a report of damage to the front door. The resident said when they came home, they noticed holes in the door possibly caused by a hammer. There are no suspects at this time. Maintenance for the apartment complex was contacted. There is no additional information at this time.

6:57 a.m. – Officers responded to an accident in the parking lot of Belchertown High School. The person was driving too fast for the road conditions and failed to maintain their travel lane, jumping the curb and coming to rest in the grass. There was front-end damage to the vehicle but no injuries were noted. The vehicle was towed from the scene.

9:54 a.m. – Officers spoke with a resident in regards to being scammed out of money. The resident said they were having computer issues and found a number for Microsoft. The resident called the number and the person said they needed money to do the computer work. The person was advised to purchase the amount of money needed in gift cards and provided the caller with the card numbers. Following the phone call, the resident became aware of the scam. The resident filed a report with the police and contact their banking of the incident.

11:20 p.m. – An officer responded to a residence for a report of a package stolen package from a front porch. The resident said the package was delivered to the residence and was last observed at 8 p.m. Later in the evening the resident reported noticing the package was then missing. The resident also stated there was another box containing other items that was missing as well. There are no known suspects.

11:48 p.m. – An officer on patrol on Chauncey Walker Rd noticed a vehicle pulled over with its hazards on and a deer was laying in roadway. The deer appeared to be badly injured. The operator told the officer they struck the deer. Due to the deer's injuries, it was euthanized.

Sunday, Dec. 20

2:57 p.m. – Officers responded to an accident on West St. One vehicle was travelling west on West St when the operator swerved to right to avoid a motor vehicle that was taking up more than half roadway. The first vehicle went off road into a snowbank. The vehicle was being pulled right and when the operator attempted to correct the vehicle, the vehicle struck a tree. It was snowing at the time of the incident. There were no injuries reported.

3:34 p.m. – Officers responded to an accident on Springfield Rd. One vehicle was heading south on Springfield Rd when the operator lost control on the snowy roadway, sliding sidesways and striking a second vehicle's driver's side rear. No injuries were reported and both vehicles were driven from the scene.

3:37 p.m. – An officer spoke with an individual in regards to a possible 209A violation.

8:38 p.m. – An officer was outside the Police Station when they heard a crash. A vehicle was pulling out the Chestnut Hill parking lot when the vehicle slid into the second street light in from State St. There was damage reported to the street light. The operator made arrangements to remove the vehicle.

Monday, Dec. 21

11:54 a.m. – An officer was on patrol, stopped at intersection of Depot Rd and Franklin St when they did a random license plate inquiry on a vehicle in front of them. The registered owner of the vehicle had an expired license and inspection sticker. The officer pulled the vehicle over and identified the driver as the owner of the vehicle. The driver didn't know their license was expired and attempted to renew it online. Due to documents needed, they were unable to renew their license. The operator was able to get friend to pick them up, however they couldn't get someone to drive the car back to their residence and the vehicle was towed. The officer gave the operator a verbal warning for an expired license and a citation for having an expired inspection sticker.

Granby Police

Editor's Note: The Granby Police Department responded to 97 calls for the week of Dec. 18 through Dec. 24. Those arrested are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. All information is provided by the Granby Police Department.

Friday, Dec. 18

2:52 p.m. – Officers took a report of identity theft. The incident is still under investigation.

Saturday, Dec. 19

11:33 a.m. – Officers investigated a two-car accident on Amherst St. No injuries were reported.

10:32 p.m. – Officers investigated an attempted use of counterfeit money at Cumberland Farms. The incident is under investigation.

Sunday, Dec. 20

2:12 p.m. –Officers investigated a two-car accident on Truby St. Minor injuries were reported.

3:41 p.m. – Officers investigated a two-car accident at the intersection of School and East State St. Minor injuries were reported.

3:56 p.m. – Officers investigated a motor vehicle accident on Chicopee St. The operator lost control of the vehicle and drove off the roadway.

Monday, Dec. 21

4:45 p.m. – Officers investigated a two-car accident at the intersection of Amherst and West State St. No injuries were reported.

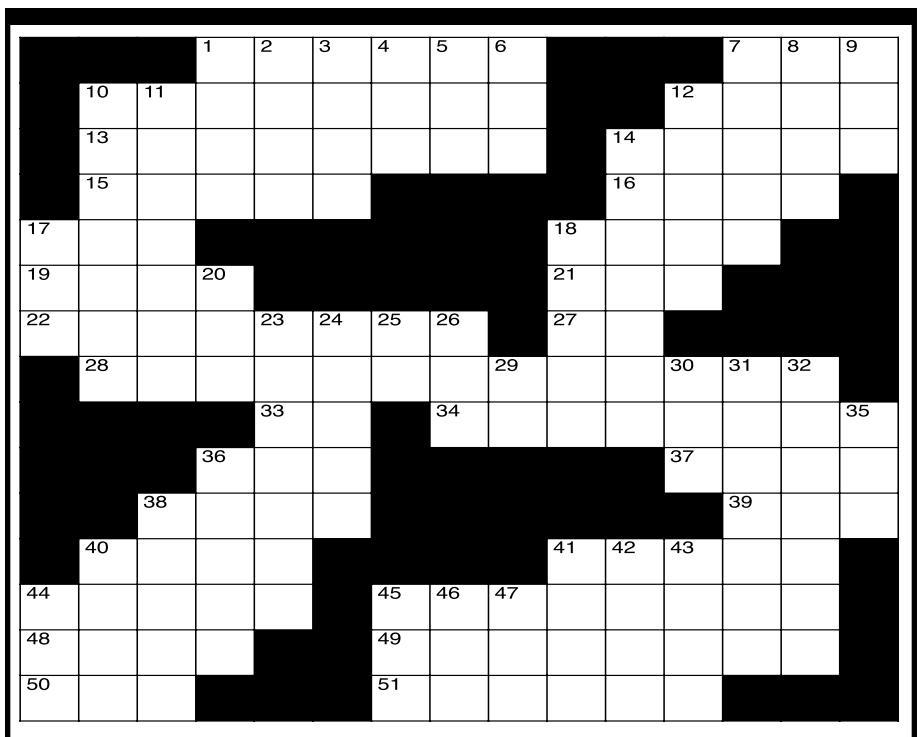
4:47 p.m. – An officer issued a criminal citation for leaving the scene of a motor vehicle accident.

Tuesday, Dec. 22

8:32 a.m. – Officers took a report of identity theft. The incident still under investigation.

Wednesday, Dec. 23

5:29 a.m. – Officers investigated a motor vehicle accident on West St. The operator lost control of their vehicle and drove off the roadway. A criminal citation was issued to the operator for leaving the scene of an accident.



CLUES ACROSS
1. Home of the Cowboys
7. "Hawaii Five-O" actor McBride
10. Most aged
12. Fitted with a shoe
13. Courteously
14. They form over cuts
15. Western Alaskan river
16. Aggressive men
17. Farm animal
18. Young woman (French)
19. Sixth month of Hebrew calendar
21. Short cry
22. State capital
27. Rural delivery
28. "Twilight Zone" creator
33. Gigabyte
34. Flammable hydrocarbon
36. Supervises flying
37. An actor who plays a principal role
38. Furnace for pottery
39. Fall back
40. Afrikaans word for language
41. Chinese city
44. Fleshy
45. Inventor
48. Taxis
49. A citizen of Spain
50. Important age for aging workers (abbr.)
51. Body part

CLUES DOWN
1. Chinese mountain range
2. Romanian city
3. Fishermen cast it
4. Shelter from wind
5. Sign language
6. Pigpen
7. Make sore
8. Flat metal shelves
9. Forms that say who you are
10. Cigar lovers' necessity
11. Popular cooking ingredient
12. Skin covering the head
14. Unshakable
17. Exclamation meaning "Finally!"
18. One of the wise men's gifts
20. Take away from
23. In accordance with the law
24. Nicole Kidman's husband
25. NY Giants legend
26. Utilize
29. Beloved Hollywood alien
30. Unwell
31. More destitute
32. Grinded together
35. Sun up in New York
36. Italian-made cars
38. Most sacred site in Islam
40. Rip apart
41. Go in a specified direction
42. Freshwater mussel genus
43. "__ the Man" Musical
44. One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
45. West coast time zone
46. Mimic
47. You can get one in summer

SOCIAL SECURITY • from page 6

Based upon what you've told me, I believe that your WEP reduction will probably be limited to one of the maximums, either half of your monthly U.K. pension, or the maximum for your "eligibility year" (2022?). We don't yet know what the standard maximum WEP reduction for 2022 will be, but for 2020 it is $480. That is the most that your Social Security benefit could normally be reduced. But if your U.K. pension is about $740 U.S. Dollars, then your maximum reduction should be about $370, because the WEP reduction can't be more than half of your non-covered (U.K.) pension. So, your U.S. Social Security benefit of $1,643 will most likely be reduced by about $370 to about $1,303. You will need to contact the U.K. pension system to see if any of your U.K. pension will be offset by your U.S. Social Security benefits.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

Country Bank announces promotions

Alyson Weeks

Erin Skoczylas

Scott Emerson

WARE – Country Bank, a full-service financial institution serving central and western Massachusetts, today announced several recent promotions of longtime staff members.

Scott Emerson has been promoted to vice president, IT security. Emerson has over 20 years of experience in the technology industry and has been an essential part of the innovation and technology team at Country Bank for 14 years. Emerson earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from UMass Amherst and has also achieved several professional certifications, including information systems security professional, information security manager, and GIAC enterprise defender.

Alyson Weeks has been promoted to assistant vice president, human resources. Weeks began her career at Country Bank 12 years ago as a teller and has worked in various other roles in the retail banking division, including teller supervisor, branch operations manager, and retail operations manager, before joining the human resources team five years ago. Weeks holds a Bachelor of Arts in History from Worcester State University and has a master's degree in Education from American International College.

Erin Skoczylas has been promoted to assistant controller. Skoczylas began her career at Country Bank 23 years ago as a part-time operations clerk. Before transitioning to accounting in 2008, she worked in various positions throughout the operations department. Skoczylas holds an Associates of Science degree from Springfield Technical Community College in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Business Administration from Western New England University. Skoczylas is also a 2017 graduate of the New England School for Financial Studies.

Promoting employees from within and providing continuous learning and development opportunities are the foundations of Country Bank's philosophy.

Senior Vice President of Human Resources, Miriam Siegel said, "We are excited to announce these promotions, not just in recognition of these long-term team members' contributions to the Bank's success, but also because each individual's history with the Bank is a perfect demonstration of the various career path opportunities available in community banking. As an organization, we are committed to helping each team member identify their career goals and work with them to reach those objectives. Their actions, along with so many others, contribute to the Bank's overall success and we are pleased to be able promote these individuals for their dedication to the organization."

About Country Bank

Country Bank is a full-service mutual community bank serving central and western Massachusetts with 14 offices in Ware, Palmer, West Brookfield, Brimfield, Belchertown, Wilbraham, Ludlow, Leicester, Paxton, Charlton, and Worcester. Country Bank is a member of FDIC, DIF, and the SUM network. Country Bank can be reached at 800-322-8233 or online at countrybank.com.

Free COVID-19 vaccines at Big Y pharmacies when available

SPRINGFIELD – In partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, all 33 Big Y Pharmacy and Wellness Centers are preparing to administer the COVID-19 vaccines once approved and available for distribution. This partnership is being established in anticipation that one or more COVID-19 vaccines will be authorized and approved for use in the United States as part of the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Strategy for COVID-19. This initiative by the HHS with pharmacies across the United States is part of the federal pharmacy program aimed to further increase access to the vaccines. The partnership has deemed pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy interns in retail and grocery stores as being crucial public health partners for increasing access and convenience of COVID-19 vaccines.

Big Y's pharmacy team currently provides seasonal flu and other routine vaccines. They plan to participate in any additional training to ensure the safe administration of the vaccine along with educating their customers about the process.

According to Charles L. D'Amour, president and CEO, "We are proud to partner with the United States government in order to provide free COVID-19 vaccines to our customers. When a vaccine is available, our pharmacy teams will be ready to administer them as per CDC guidelines."

Big Y Foods, Inc. is one of the largest independently owned supermarket chains in New England. Big Y operates 85 locations throughout Massachusetts and Connecticut including 71 supermarkets, Fresh Acres Market, Table & Vine Fine Wines and Liquors and 12 Big Y Express gas and convenience locations with almost 12,000 employees. Big Y has been recognized by Forbes as a Best-in-State Employer in Massachusetts and Connecticut, as well as 2018 Employer of Choice by the Employers Association of the Northeast. Founded in 1936 by brothers Paul and Gerald D'Amour, the store was named after an intersection in Chicopee, Massachusetts where two roads converge to form a "Y".

Hampshire Sheriff alerts residents to phone scam

REGION – Hampshire County Sheriff Patrick Cahillane is alerting residents to a phone scam being perpetrated in the Pioneer Valley.

The scam, commonly known as "phone spoofing" or "caller ID spoofing," is when a scammer uses caller ID spoofing technology to impersonate the phone numbers of local businesses or government agencies in attempt to acquire money or some sort of personal information.

On Monday, Dec. 7, Sheriff Cahillane said his office had received several calls from area residents reporting that they had received calls from a person identifying themselves as an employee of the Hampshire Sheriff's Office seeking money due to court charges, and then requesting payment via gift cards.

"The Hampshire Sheriff's Office will never, never, call private citizens and demand payment or accept payment of any kind over the phone," Sheriff Cahillane said. "If you receive such a call, the best tactic is to simply hang up. Anyone receiving such a fraudulent call might also consider contacting their local police department, or notifying my office at 413-584-5911. The FBI website – www.fbi.gov – also has information about how to avoid such scams."

Here are some additional tips from the Better Business Bureau on what to do if a scammer calls:

• Hang up – don't press any buttons and, if you received a voicemail, don't call the scammer back. We all like to have the last word, but returning the phone call may just give the scammer information they can use.

• Don't trust caller ID – scammers have technology that lets them

See **PHONE SCAM,** page 15 •

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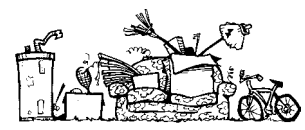

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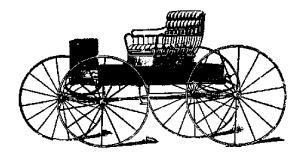

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13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 Base Price $26.00
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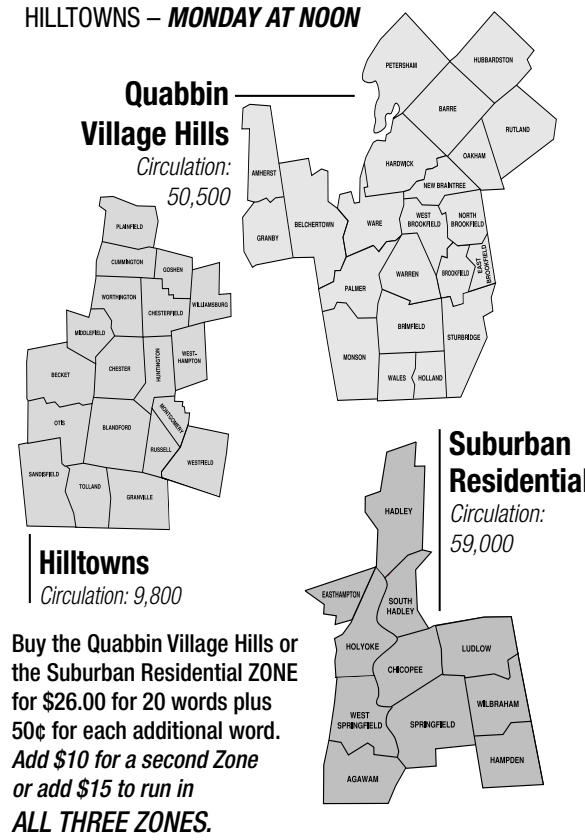
25 Base Price $28.50	26 Base Price $29.00	27 Base Price $29.50	28 Base Price $30.00
29 Base Price $30.50	30 Base Price $31.00	31 Base Price $31.50	32 Base Price $32.00
33 Base Price $32.50	34 Base Price $33.00	35 Base Price $33.50	36 Base Price $34.00
37 Base Price $34.50	38 Base Price $35.00	39 Base Price $35.50	40 Base Price $36.00



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This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development " HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

AMHERST

Piano artist releases first songbook

Sheet music book was 35 years in the making

AMHERST – When Dan Kennedy released his "Best of Solo Piano, 2007-2018" he technically became an author. But that's not why he wanted to write books, it was in order to notate his own piano music and make it available to others.

"I admittedly have been very sluggish to put out the sheet music," said Kennedy. "These editions represent the absolute heart and soul of who I am and what I believe. I really want to get these books into the hands of those who dare to play the piano."

The "Best of Solo Piano, 2007-2018" is available four ways, as coil bound books on cream paper, as a downloadable version; both either as album versions, or adapted easy piano versions. There is also a companion CD out containing matching 17 tracks whose dates go back to 1985, and whose dates of recording harken back to 2007.

As someone who has performed in 21 U.S. states and Canada, Kennedy harkens back to the Romantic Era of 1830s Germany when piano students were required to include an improvisation in their home concerts. With a style sometimes described as "Classical Crossover," Kennedy is a contemporary solo pianist, classically trained at Oberlin Conservatory and New England Conservatory.

"I was actually a [Music] Composition major, and when I wasn't doing my theory homework I often signed up to play at the campus coffeehouse to try out some brand-new piano music," he said.

Kennedy recently garnered his first international award. Announced in Montréal by the Enlightened Piano Radio, the prestigious 2019 Album of the Year award went to the composer-pianist's fourth studio album, Mountains Made of Shadow, Anthems Made of Light (Mt. Pollux Music). That album also went to #5 on Gaia Prime Radio's Best Contemporary Instrumental Albums of 2018.

With 24 years experience, Kennedy teaches piano and theory/composition at his home studio in South Amherst. His young composers have attended Harvard, Amherst College, Berklee, Yale, and BUTI (the junior division of Tanglewood.) He has also served as Artist-in-Residence in the Deer Park, WA Public Schools.

"Not every student wants to compose, but many do. My job when I teach Composition is to 'allow' the music, not discourage it. I dwell in possibility," Kennedy said.

Kennedy's "Best of Solo Piano, 2007-2018 songbooks" are available for direct purchase from the composer's website (www.dankennedy.us), as well as on the internet at Sheet Music Plus, Amazon.

PHONE SCAM • from page 13

display any number or organization name on your screen.

- Never give out any financial information – if you did not initiate the call, do not provide bank account, credit card or Social Security numbers over the phone unless you have thoroughly done your research and verified the caller.

"The duty of the Hampshire Sheriff's Office is to protect public safety," Sheriff Cahillane added. "We want everyone to stay safe, and to remember that my office will never make these kinds of phone calls."

NOTICE

ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.

BUDGET • from page 1

lot of work for basically nothing, which is kind of frustrating."

Moving to the current budget, the 2021 fiscal year, the state recently approved its budget. Panto reflected on the status in Belchertown, which was mostly positive.

"We scaled back what we estimated in revenue from the cherry sheet," Panto said. "The numbers we used versus the final numbers, we're not in deficit we are $21,000 to the good. We are not in as horrible shape as it looked on the surface. We are in good shape."

However, there were a couple of items that are costly, one of which was the overtime for the Belchertown Fire Department which is in "horrible shape," according to Panto.

"With COVID-related overtime being covered by CARES Act funding, we're still in really rough shape," Panto said. "We will need money for that, and we will need a good amount for that. We've used about 75% of the overtime budget in that line item. We've had some heating repairs that may come back to haunt is in the form of an $11,000 expense at the police station."

She said there is $40,000 left, according to November budget reports, meaning about $120,000 was used.

Town Administrator Gary Brougham told the two bodies that the rate is expected to continue.

"It will continue to track the way that it has been, for a simple reason, increased call volume and we do not have enough employees," Brougham said. "Anytime we have one employee out, for whatever reason, it's an overtime shift."

Moving to the next fiscal year, Finance Committee Chair Ron Aponte proposed a level service budget from departments.

"What we could do is start meeting with department heads in the end of January, beginning of February timeframe, which also coincides with the governor's original budget comes out," he said, adding that Gov. Charlie Baker's proposal is used by the town as a benchmark. "Before we talk to the department heads, I think we should have that revenue meeting where we decide what the revenue figure we're comfortable with."

Members of the committee and the board agreed with Aponte.

Finance Committee member Laurie Shea asked if the department heads would also include their top three priorities with the level service funding and Selectboard member Ed Boscher added that items to cut should be included.

Panto said she believed the groups should wait until there is a better idea of the budget before asking the departments to do so.

"It's not worth the upheaval it would cause," she said. "It's more than just the numbers on paper we're talking about."

Selectboard Chair Gail Gramarossa said she could live with that process in a sequence rather than all at once.

"We have asked folks to come with top priorities, if there were additional resources," Gramarossa said. "As we begin those hard conversations and we know what the revenue is, what the level service budget looks like, I could live with it in a sequential way. It is helpful to have an idea of where modifications could be made if necessary."

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

PROJECT:
Proposed Solar Array
LOCATION:
0 Gulf Road, Belchertown
PROPONENT:
BWC Scarboro Brook, LLC

The undersigned is submitting an Environmental Notification Form ("ENF") to the Secretary of Energy & Environmental Affairs on or before December 31, 2020

This will initiate review of the above project pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act ("MEPA", M.G.L. c. 30, s.s. 61-62I). **Copies of the ENF may be obtained from:**

Andrea Kendall,
LEC Environmental
Consultants, Inc.
380 Lowell Street,
Suite 101,
Wakefield, MA 01880
781-245-2500

Copies of the ENF are also being sent to the Conservation Commission and Planning Board of Belchertown where they may be inspected.

The Secretary of Energy & Environmental Affairs will publish notice of the ENF in the Environmental Monitor, will receive public comments on the project for 20 days, and will then decide, within ten days, if an Environmental Impact Report is needed. A site visit and consultation session on the project may also be scheduled. All persons wishing to comment on the project, or to be notified of a site visit or consultation session, should write to the Secretary of Energy & Environmental Affairs, 100 Cambridge St., Suite 900, Boston, Massachusetts 02114, Attention: MEPA Office, referencing the above project.

By
BWC Scarboro Brook, LLC
12/31/2020

Public Hearing
Special Permit
Legal Notice
Belchertown
Planning Board

In accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, Section 11, the Planning Board will hold a public hearing to discuss a Site Plan Approval application for a non-profit residential education center, submitted by The Cutchins Program for Children and Families, 52 Old Bay Road, Map 229, Lots 17 and 16.1, Belchertown, MA, Owner- The Wayne A. Lebrun Living Trust.

A public hearing will be held as follows:

Place: Remotely by Planning Board, Belchertown
Date: January 26, 2021
Time: 7:05 pm

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

https ://global. gotomeeting. com/join/571586205

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States: +1 (646) 749-3122

Access Code: 571-586-205

New to GoToMeeting? Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: https :1/g lobal. gotomeeting .com/install/571586205

The application is available for inspection on the Belchertown.org- Planning Board website.

James Natle
Chairman, Planning Board
12/24, 12/31/2020

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

SNOW'S SELF STORAGE LLC, will sell at **Public Auction** at 746 Bay Road, Belchertown, MA, all the personal property stored in its facility by:

SP34: Evan Stangl
SP4: Changrui Xin
SP29: Changrui Xin

At **10:00 a.m., January 16, 2021,** at the premises of SNOW'S SELF STORAGE LLC, 746 Bay Road, Belchertown, MA, by Warren Schreiber, Auctioneer, as Agent for Snow's Self Storage, LLC.

Snow's Self-Storage reserves the following rights: to bid at the public auction, to refuse any and all bids, or to cancel the auction at any time for any reason.
12/24, 12/31/2020

Please check the accuracy of your legal notice prior to submission (i.e., date, time, spelling). Also, be sure the requested publication date coincides with the purpose of the notice, or as the law demands. Thank you.

PUBLIC NOTICES
ARE NOW ONLINE

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3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

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Gingerbread House WINNERS

Cheryl Dowling won the most traditional category in Belchertown Cultural Council's gingerbread house competition.

Winning the Belchertown category of the gingerbread house competition was Alene Motta with a Quabbin-themed gingerbread visitor's center.

Jacob O'Connor was winner of the kid's category in the Belchertown Cultural Council gingerbread house competition.

BELCHERTOWN – In its second annual Winter Light Night gingerbread house competition, the Belchertown Cultural Council went virtual.

The group recently announced the winners of the competition, which were voted on by members of the community.

In the kid's category, for children 12 and under, Jacob O'Connor won first place. Cheryl Dowling won first place for the most traditional gingerbread house.

Alene Motta won first place for the Belchertown category with a Quabbin themed ginger-creation. Her piece included the Quabbin Visitor's Center, a fisherman and other elements.

Each of the entries into the contest were posted to the cultural council's website, with multiple photos, and in some cases, videos of the entries.